

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Please cancel claim 14 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claims 1-3 and 8-10 and add new claims 15-21 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A spark plug comprising:

a metal shell;

a center electrode retained in said metal shell ~~to be~~ and insulated from said metal shell, said center electrode having a body portion made of a first material and a tip portion made of a second material different from the first material, wherein the tip portion is connected to an end of the body portion by a welding material; and

a ground electrode opposed to said center electrode to define a spark gap between said ground electrode and said center electrode, said ground electrode being joined to said metal shell through a weld fused by one of a laser welding material and an arc welding material.

2. (Currently Amended) A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein the whole of said ground electrode is made of an Iridium alloy and ~~welded~~ connected at an end thereof directly by a welding material to said metal shell.

3. (Currently Amended) A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein a depth of a the weld between said ground electrode and said metal shell ~~lies within a range of~~ is about 0.3 mm to 1.5 mm.

4. (Original) A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein said metal shell is made of an Fe-base alloy containing one of 0.15% by weight or less of S, 0.35% by weight or less of Si, 0.25% by weight or less of C, 1.5% by weight or less of Mn, and 0.1% by weight or less of P.

5. (Original) A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein said metal shell is made of an Fe-base alloy containing 0.15% by weight or less of S, 0.35% by weight or less of Si, 0.25% by weight or less of C, 1.5% by weight or less of Mn, and 0.1% by weight or less of P.

6. (Original) A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein said ground electrode is made of an alloy containing a main component of 50 Wt % or more of Pt and an additive of at least one of Rh, Ir, Os, Ni, W, Pd, and Ru.

7. (Original) A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein said ground electrode is made of an alloy containing a main component of 50 Wt % or more of Ir and an additive of at least one of Rh, Pt, Os, Ni, W, Pd, and Ru.

8. (Currently Amended) A spark plug comprising:  
a metal shell;  
a center electrode retained in said metal shell ~~to be~~ and insulated from said metal shell, said center electrode having a body portion made of a first material and a tip portion

made of a second material different from the first material, wherein the tip portion is connected to an end of the body portion by a welding material; and

a ground electrode opposed to said center electrode to define a spark gap between said ground electrode and said center electrode, said ground electrode being all made of an Iridium alloy including a main component of 50 Wt% or more of Ir and joined directly to said metal shell.

9. (Currently Amended) A spark plug as set forth in claim 8, wherein said ground electrode is joined to said metal shell by a laser welding material.

10. (Currently Amended) A spark plug as set forth in claim 9, wherein a depth of a the weld between said ground electrode and said metal shell lies within a range of is about 0.3 mm to 1.5 mm.

11. (Original) A spark plug as set forth in claim 8, wherein said metal shell is made of an Fe-base alloy containing one of 0.15% by weight or less of S, 0.35% by weight or less of Si, 0.25% by weight or less of C, 1.5% by weight or less of Mn, and 0.1% by weight or less of P.

12. (Original) A spark plug as set forth in claim 8, wherein said metal shell is made of an Fe-base alloy containing 0.15% by weight or less of S, 0.35% by weight or less of Si, 0.25% by weight or less of C, 1.5% by weight or less of Mn, and 0.1% by weight or less of P.

13. (Original) A spark plug as set forth in claim 8, wherein said ground electrode is made of an alloy containing a main component of 50 Wt % or more of Ir and an additive of at least one of Rh, Pt, Os, Ni, W, Pd, and Ru.

14. (Canceled)

15. (New) A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein the tip portion of the center electrode includes an Ir alloy chip.

16. (New) A spark plug as set forth in claim 15, wherein the body portion is made of a cylindrical member that includes a core portion made of a first metallic material having a higher thermal conductivity than the tip portion, and an external portion made of a second metallic material having higher thermal and corrosion resistance than the tip portion.

17. A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein the tip portion of the center electrode is made of a Pt alloy.

18. (New) A spark plug as set forth in claim 8, wherein the tip portion of the center electrode includes an Ir alloy chip.

19. (New) A spark plug as set forth in claim 18, wherein the body portion is made of a cylindrical member which includes a core portion made of a first metallic material having a higher thermal conductivity than the tip portion and an external portion made of a

second metallic material having higher thermal and corrosion resistance than the tip portion.

20. (New) A spark plug as set forth in claim 8, wherein the tip portion of the center electrode is made of a Pt alloy.

21. (New) A spark plug as set forth in claim 8, wherein the ground electrode is L-shaped.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS**

The attached sheet of amended drawings include Figs. 14(a)-14(c). This sheet replaces the original sheet including Figs. 14(a)-14(c).

Attachment: Replacement Sheet